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Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-seventh year

Identical letters dated 17 November 2012 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I am compelled to convey to you our alarm regarding the rapid deterioration on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Israel, the occupying Power, continues its military campaign against the Gaza Strip, wreaking ever more havoc, death and destruction among the Palestinian civilian population. We condemn in the strongest terms these Israeli military attacks and the continued perpetration of State terror against the Palestinian people.

Since my last letter to you, on 15 November 2012, the Israeli occupying forces have continued to carry out aerial bombings and missile strikes targeting hundreds of locations throughout the Gaza Strip. Reports at this moment are that at least 47 Palestinians have been killed since the start of the Israeli military campaign against our people on 12 November 2012. In addition, this lethal campaign has caused injury to at least 425 other Palestinians, some of whom are critically wounded and struggling for their lives.

The casualties have tragically included many children, women and elderly persons and many members of the same families. In this regard, many of the injured have succumbed to their wounds, and the survivors are suffering gravely in this besieged part of our homeland, where medicines are in short supply and proper medical equipment is either completely dilapidated or absent owing to the inhumane, illegal blockade that continues to be imposed by Israel in defiance of international law and the demands of the international community to immediately lift it.

Israel's air strikes and bombardment have included the deliberate targeting of homes in residential civilian areas, including refugee camps, in the Gaza Strip. At the same time, public property and infrastructure, including government buildings, police stations and a football stadium, are being attacked. Massive destruction is once again being wrought by Israel in Gaza through the use of all military means available to the occupying Power.

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There can be no doubt that Israel, the occupying Power, is committing grave breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which is wholly applicable to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The wilful killing of civilians and the deliberate destruction of civilian properties constitute war crimes, for which Israel must be held accountable. Moreover, Israel's actions are in direct violation of numerous provisions of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and in gross, systematic violation of the international human rights covenants, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

For all of these crimes against the Palestinian people, Israel must be held fully accountable and justice must be achieved for the victims. The failure to do so will only embolden Israel in its sense of impunity, further exacerbating the conflict and perpetuating the suffering of the Palestinian people under this illegitimate occupation. The consequences of this on the human rights situation of our people, the prospects for realization of the two-State solution and a comprehensive peace settlement, and the prospects for peace and security in our region are grave.

We thus once again urgently call on the international community to act collectively and responsibly to address this crisis. The duties of the international community, including the Security Council, are clear and must be respected and upheld. International law, including humanitarian and human rights law, must be upheld and must not be allowed to be so flagrantly dismissed without consequence. Immediate action must be undertaken, particularly by the Security Council in accordance with its mandate under the Charter of the United Nations, to bring a halt to Israel's military onslaught against the Palestinian people and to douse the flames of this most recent, deadly cycle of violence that has already claimed too many innocent civilian lives, for whom we deeply mourn.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 440 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 15 November 2012 (A/ES-10/568-S/2012/846), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations